



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 1330.0 - Education News, July 2009

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## Education News - July, 2009

This newsletter highlights the latest curriculum related teaching resources, student activities and statistical tools that have been developed by ABS Education Services as well as other ABS resources that are useful for schools.

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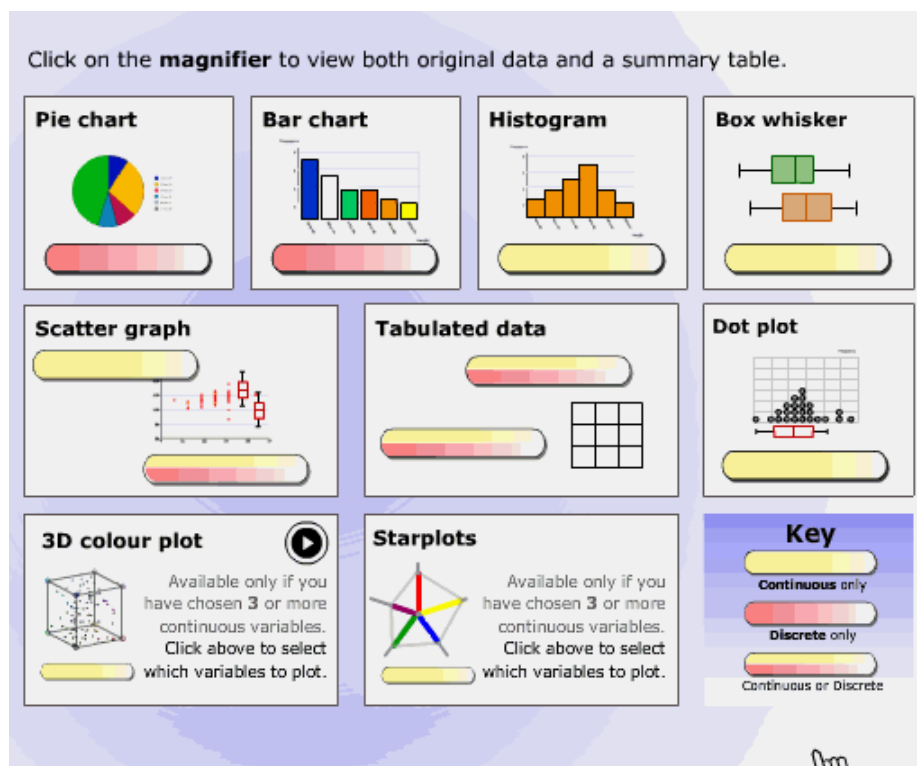
### 1. CensusAtSchool News



#### Release of the NEW CensusAtSchool International 'DataTool'

Australian students can now access other countries' data more easily than ever before.

The Royal Statistical Society Centre for Statistical Education (RSSCSE) has developed a Database Interrogation tool or 'DataTool' that allows quick and easy access to the large amounts of data collected by international CensusAtSchool projects. The tool allows users to choose which variables they want to analyse, and helps them select a suitable graph for representing the data. This effective data visualisation resource will engage students in the analysis of data and hence assist their understanding of statistical concepts. The new DataTool can be accessed from the CensusAtSchool UK website. At the time of writing, the Australian data was unavailable from the site, but we are assisting RSSCSE to resolve this issue.



## CensusAtSchool Questionnaire returns in 2010!

The CensusAtSchool questionnaire **will open in 2010 and run annually thereafter**. Your students can be part of the CensusAtSchool database when the questionnaire re-opens in Term 1, 2010.

Running the project annually provides an increased opportunity for students' data to be part of the nation-wide database. They can then analyse that data in the second half of the year. Annual data collection also offers teachers the opportunity to incorporate CensusAtSchool into their teaching program every year. Feedback from teachers told us that they were keen to complete the CensusAtSchool questionnaire with their students on a more regular basis.

This is an exciting development; one that aims to further improve the statistical literacy of students in upper primary to senior secondary. It also allows teachers to more easily build their own expertise with both CensusAtSchool and statistical concepts.

For more details about the upcoming project please see news article [CensusAtSchool to run annually from 2010](#) and watch this space for information on how your students can get involved in next year's Australian CensusAtSchool data collection!

**How to get involved:** Generate a **Random Sample** from the **Student Area** of the website. Please contact the **CensusAtSchool Team** if you have a query or if you would like to provide some feedback. We'd love to hear from you.

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## 2. Indigenous Statistics for Schools



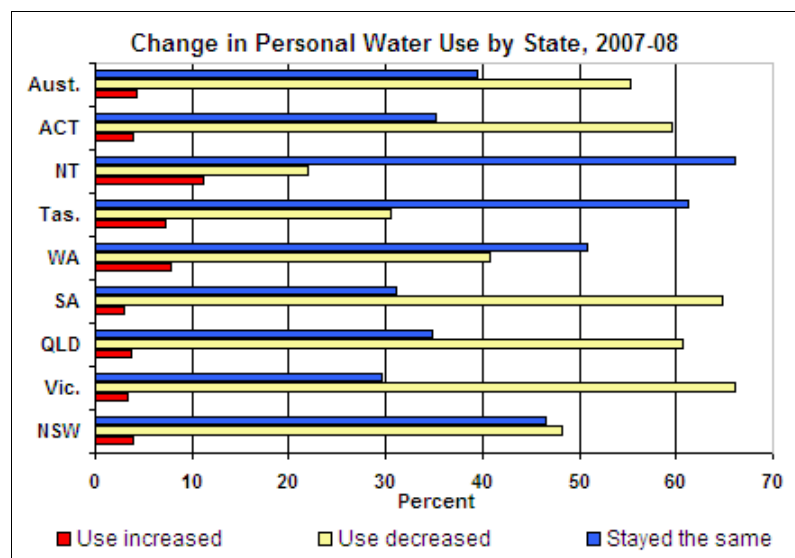
On 9 July Education Services released Indigenous Statistics for Schools (ISS). These pages include up to date statistics on the Indigenous population, education, health, housing, work and more. Links to the original on-line data sources are also provided for those who would like to delve deeper.

The pages are aimed at students from upper primary to senior secondary as well as teachers who will now be able to find current data about Indigenous Australians much more easily.

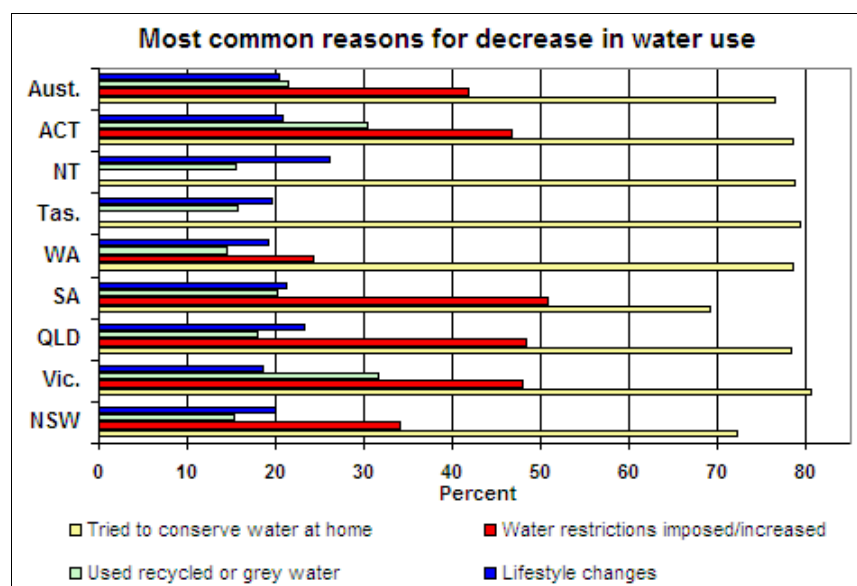
The ISS web pages also cover general issues such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identification (including the history of the Census questions on ethnicity), how Indigenous statistics are collected and the importance of accurate Indigenous statistics.

### 3. An Idea for the Classroom - Water Use

During the financial year 2007-08, the ABS surveyed persons over the age of 18 years on their environmental views and behaviour (Environmental Views and Behaviour, 2007-08 (cat. no. 4626.0.55.001)). One question asked whether personal water use had remained the same, increased or decreased over the preceding 12 months. Another asked what caused the change if there was one.



You could ask your students to graph the change in personal water use by state/territory (see example above). Ask students to consider what reasons there might be for the differences between the states. Then have students examine the reasons respondents gave for their changed water use by state/territory. Were the reasons expected?



You may want to compare this data with student responses to the questions about water from the CensusAtSchool questionnaire. (In particular Questions 38 and 40 relate to water use.)

**Do you have a classroom idea that uses ABS data or ABS Education products? Let us know at [education@abs.gov.au](mailto:education@abs.gov.au) and we can share it with schools around Australia.**

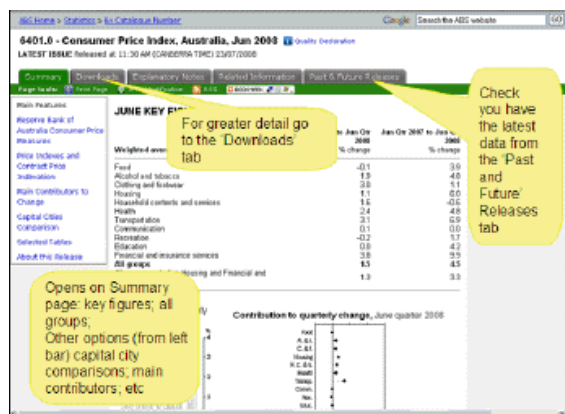
### 4. Student Achievement in Maths and Science

The June, 2009 release of Australian Social Trends (cat no. 4102.0) includes an article that examines the data from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2007. It examines the achievement of Australian Year 4 and Year 8 students in maths and science and compares the results across a number of countries. The article also discusses factors that may affect students' results such as student access to resources, student backgrounds and attitudes, teachers qualifications and the school environment. Changes from the 1995 and 2003 TIMSS results are also shown.



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## 5. Finding your way around the ABS website - online!



Following the very successful teacher professional development days around the country, ABS Education Services have added navigation assistants to our web pages that will help you find your way around the ABS website. These Powerpoint slide shows are available for the general ABS web pages (including Census, National Accounts, regional profiles, and more), Education Services specific web pages and for CensusAtSchool.

You can print these out, or download and use them to show other staff how to make the most of the amazing resource that is the ABS website.

For further information or to make suggestions please contact us (also see details below).

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## 6. Homelessness in Australia

A new activity (Classroom Activity Geo 14 - The Homeless) explores the issue of homelessness through statistical data from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing and other ABS source material. The data provided helps to develop a picture of homelessness across the nation, with additional statistics for the homeless in the inner part of Australia's capital cities.

To develop a more detailed picture of each capital city, this activity could be integrated with Classroom Activity Geo 13 (Moving In Moving Up) which explores the rapid changes occurring in Australia's inner cities. These activities could be especially relevant to 'city programs' that are completed by many students.

'The Homeless' activity also fits in Civics and Citizenship or in Human Development classes.

Visit the **Geography Section** of the Education Services website to access this and other Geography activities.

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## 7. Have Your Say Online



ABS Education Services wants to know what you think about our web pages and our resources. What do you find helpful on our website, what is not helpful, what hinders you using our pages, what assists you, how do you use ABS data, what else would be useful for you?

Please complete our on-line survey so that we can improve what we do and how we do it.

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## 8. Recently Released Publications

Remember, **all** ABS publications are **free** to download from the **ABS website**.

Australian Social Trends, June 2009 (cat. no. 4102.0)

The June issue of Australian Social Trends includes a number of sections of interest to teachers. As well as the article on TIMSS mentioned above, this edition includes sections on Health Literacy, Casual Employees and Young people who live with their parents.

Spreadsheets covering key population statistics, education and training data and other areas of social concern are also included.

Information Paper: Introduction of the Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index, 2009 (cat no. 6466.0)

This publication will be especially useful to teachers of Economics. The ABS was funded by the Australian Government to develop a new index that specifically reflects changes in the living costs of pensioners and other households receiving income support from the government. It will be known as the Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index (PBLCI). The ABS will publish the PBLCI on a quarterly basis commencing on 24 August, 2009.

This paper provides an overview of the new index, its relationship to Consumer Price Index (CPI) and quarterly movements for the period June 2007 to June 2008.

Environment and Energy News, June 2009 (cat. no. 4653.0)

This newsletter from the ABS Centre of Environment and Energy Statistics (CEES) is published twice a year and highlights developments in environment and energy statistics. This edition includes articles on water use, land management, energy accounts and environmental views and behaviours.

Self-employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, 2006 (cat. no. 4722.0.55.009)

This snapshot describes the characteristics of Indigenous people who indicated they were self-employed in the 2006 Census. Characteristics included in the analysis are age, sex, hours worked, income, industry of employment and occupation.

Housing Finance, Australia, May 2009 (cat. no. 5609.0)

This publication contains time series data for secured and unsecured housing finance commitments for owner occupation, commitments for construction or purchase of dwellings for rent or resale, and loans outstanding for individuals/households for housing. Also included is the number and value of commitments made by banks, permanent building societies, wholesale lenders and other lenders, provided to individuals/households. These commitments are classified by construction of dwellings, purchase of new and established dwellings, refinancing of existing dwellings and alterations and additions to dwellings.

You can view the full range of previously released publications and upcoming releases from the ABS home page under **Product Releases**.

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## 9. Contact details

How to contact **ABS Education Services**

**Free Call:** 1800 623 273

**email:** [education@abs.gov.au](mailto:education@abs.gov.au)

**Mail:** GPO Box 2796  
Melbourne, 3001

## Subscribe

**Education News** is a totally free resource that aims to assist teachers use ABS data in their classroom. When you **subscribe** you will be notified of each new edition as it is published.

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This page last updated 12 October 2009

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